

INTERMEDIATE STRENGTH EXERCISES FOR BACK AND ARMS

BOWS AND ARROWS

This is one of my favorites. I like how the chest is stretched while the back is strengthened—it's a great combination! When done correctly, participants will look like archers aiming at their target and pulling back their bow string. Talk about targeted exercise!

Benefits »

- Strengthens upper and midback; especially those important shoulder blade retractors.
- Enhances posture and uses tall sitting posture and core stability.
- Incorporates head turns to enhance neck flexibility.
- Allows participants to do the exercise either seated or standing.

Set It Up »

Each participant will need a Thera-Band for this exercise.

How to Do It »

The Start

- Participants Tall Sit toward the front of their chair. Abs are in and spine is lifted.
- They hang the middle part of a Thera-Band over one hand (between the thumb and four fingers).
- Hold that arm out to the side, straight and at shoulder height.
- Turn their head to look down the length of the arm pointed to the side. Cue participants to pretend they are aiming a bow, looking down their arm at their target.
- Meanwhile, the other hand takes hold of the hanging part of band about 8 inches (20 centimeters) down from the other hand.
- Lift that elbow away from the chest.
- Now participants look like archers ready to pull back the bow. The head is turned toward the target and they are looking down their extended arm. The back hand is holding the Thera-Band taut as it would be on a bow string. Participants are ready.



The Moves

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Draw the pretend bowstring back and across the chest. Your hand will slide across your chest from forward shoulder to back shoulder. The shoulder blade of the pulling arm will pull toward the spine.
- ⦿ Can you feel your shoulder blade slide in next to your spine? I think it feels like parallel parking for the shoulder blade!
- ⦿ Repeat 8 to 12 times, as tolerated, with each arm.
- ⦿ Repeat with the other arm.

Take It Further »

- ⦿ Tighten up on the Thera-Band or use a band with greater resistance.
- ⦿ Increase repetitions to 15.
- ⦿ Slow the movement and hold the end point longer.

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Sit with feet tandem and heels lifted.
- ⦿ Stand in front of a chair, feet parallel. The back of one leg should touch the front of the chair.

Keep It Safe »

Cue participants to maintain tall sitting posture throughout. Nothing should hurt.